

HONORING COAL MINERS FROM UPPER BIG BRANCH MINE IN WEST VIRGINIA

SPEECH OF

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 14, 2010

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today, I extend my condolences to the community of Raleigh County, West Virginia, as it mourns the loss of 29 miners in the collapse of the Upper Big Branch Mine-South, the worst U.S. mining disaster in decades. I also would like to express my heartfelt condolences to the families of victims who perished in the collapse.

The profession of coal mining is important not only to our nation's past, but also to its future, as we search for alternatives to our dependence on foreign oil. These professions power our economies and shape our culture.

I commend the tireless efforts of Raleigh County's first responders, as well as the volunteer efforts of those trained in mine rescue, and for the long hours they devoted to save the lives of the trapped miners.

The role of Congress in securing the health and safety of coal miners is essential and important. I take my role in the process of ensuring that violations of safety codes are properly dealt with and recorded, so communities like Raleigh County, West Virginia can avoid tragedy.

I would like to thank Rep. RAHALL for introducing this piece of legislation, and express our Nation's sympathy and support for the fallen miners, their families and their community.

TAXES

HON. BOB GOODLATTE

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 2010

Mr. GOODLATTE. Madam Speaker, today, tax day, is the most stressful day of the year for taxpayers. April 15th is a day filled with aggravation and frustration as hard working Americans are confronted with piles of forms, confusing instructions, and the prospect of turning their hard-earned money over to the government. In 1935, the 1040 tax form contained two pages of instructions, today it is 155 pages, forcing Americans to devote a tremendous amount of resources to try to comply with this monstrosity. In fact, Americans will devote an estimated 7.7 billion hours complying with the tax code, and will spend an estimated \$29.33 billion on tax software, preparers, and other expenses related to filing their taxes.

Over the past year, we have seen citizens from around the nation express their frustration about this nefarious tax code. Taxpayers have pleaded with Congress to be better stewards of their money and reform our broken tax code. The tax code Americans are forced to comply with discourages savings and investment, and is impossibly complex. It has become all too clear that the current code is broken beyond repair and cannot be fixed so we must start over.

I understand the frustrations of taxpayers and I have introduced H.R. 982, the Tax Code

Termination Act, which will force Congress to finally address fundamental tax reform. This legislation, with 115 bipartisan cosponsors, will abolish the tax code by December 2012, and call on Congress to approve a new federal tax system by July of the same year.

While almost every Member of Congress would recognize that our tax code is no longer working in a fair manner for Americans, nothing has been done to create a more equitable tax code. Congress won't act on fundamental tax reform unless it is forced to do so. My bill will force Congress to finally debate and address fundamental tax reform.

Once this bill becomes law, today's oppressive tax code would survive for only three more years, at which time it would expire and be replaced with a new tax code that will be determined by Congress, the President, and the American people. This legislation will allow us, as a nation, to collectively decide what the new tax system should look like. Having a date-certain to end the current tax code will force the issue to the top of the national agenda.

Although many questions remain about the best way to reform our tax system, I am certain that if Congress is forced to address the issue we can create a tax code that is simpler, fairer, and better for our economy than the one we are forced to comply with today.

Whichever tax system is adopted, the key ingredients should be: a low rate for all Americans; tax relief for working people; protection of the rights of taxpayers and reduction in tax collection abuses; promotion of savings and investment; and encouragement of economic growth and job creation.

Taxes may be unavoidable but they don't have to be unfair and overcomplicated. I urge my colleagues to join me as a cosponsor of H.R. 982, the Tax Code Termination Act and end the broken tax system that exists today.

NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK, KING COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM

HON. DAVID G. REICHERT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 2010

Mr. REICHERT. Madam Speaker, this week we'll be recognizing National Library Week all across our great country. In an age of tough economic forecasts, and families scrambling to make ends meet while still engaging in their communities, libraries around the United States have seen more people walk through their doors, visit their websites and communicate with their employees than perhaps ever before. Indeed, the library systems of America are operating at unprecedented levels. Rather than shrinking in their responsibility, many systems are proactively courting members of their communities and expanding the resources they have available to help push this country forward. I am very fortunate to represent the 8th Congressional District of Washington, and to observe and follow the work being done by my childhood library system, the King County Library System.

The King County Library System, led by Director Bill Ptacek, is the third-busiest library system in the United States. It is a remarkable distinction. In his introduction to their year-in-review for 2009, Director Ptacek wrote: "KCLS

developed an innovative approach in response to the economic crisis to guide patrons to reliable information when they needed it most." Citizens in our region looked to their library system for help and the King County Library System responded: In 2009, nearly 10 million people walked through the doors of their local library and more than 21 million items were circulated. The library catalog of the King County Library System had nearly 89 million visits and the system's website—kingcountylibrarysystem.org—received nearly 27 million hits. In other words, I can think of very few public organizations busier than the King County Library System and the System has responded, stepping up to meet the challenge in a big way.

Director Ptacek and his staff have expanded collections and streamlined service using technology and terrific, innovative organizational structure and management. The King County Library System has increased its technological output and reached out proactively to underserved communities in King County with great success. The system has ensconced itself in the communities it serves and has become a huge asset for families, community groups and local governments. The King County Library System has researched and developed programs specifically targeting young children in their formative years to get excited about literacy and research; they've done the same specifically targeting children who speak English as a second language. Overall, the King County Library System is providing the people of King County with a large public organization that is best described with one word: innovative.

Director Ptacek, his managers, and the employees of the KCLS deserve our utmost respect and admiration. The system answers the call of communities each and every day, without fail. A large public organization with such an innovative spirit and flexible structure always deserves accolades and encouragement. I am proud to honor the KCLS during National Library Week, during a difficult period and for serving our communities in such efficient, creative, and meaningful ways.

BI-PARTISAN MAJORITY IN THE U.S. HOUSE CALLS FOR PROTECTION OF CAMP ASHRAF RESIDENTS

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 15, 2010

Mr. FILNER. Madam Speaker, on March 17, 2010, Congressman BOB FILNER (D-CA), Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN (R-FL), Ranking Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, were joined by 10 of their colleagues, including three from the House Foreign Affairs Committee, in a briefing to announce the support by a bi-partisan House majority for the humanitarian rights and protection of residents of Camp Ashraf in Iraq.

In his remarks, Filner announced that following last July's deadly assault by the Iraqi security forces against unarmed residents of Camp Ashraf, home to 3,400 members of Iran's main opposition, the People's Mojahedin